GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:333
ANSWERED ON:18.08.2004
DISPOSAL OF HOSPITAL WASTE
Jagannath Dr. M.;Mohale Shri Punnulal

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government hospitals in the country are disposing hospital waste especially mercury waste which causes pollution and spread diseases as reported in the `HINDU` dated July 2, 2004;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein;

(c) whether the scientists have developed incinerators to immediately burn hazardous hospital wastes;

(d) if so, whether the Government proposes to install the incinerators in Government hospitals;

(e) if so, the details thereof;

(f) whether the Government proposes to study the report released by the Toxics Link, a Non-Governmental Organisation, on disposal of hospital waste;

(g) if so, the details thereof; and

(h) the immediate steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to save the situation from further deterioration?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS)

(a)to(h): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 333 FOR 18TH AUGUST, 2004

Health being a State subject, it is the primary responsibility of the concerned State Government to take all necessary actions through the State Pollution Control Boards in pursuance of the Biomedical Waste (Management and Handling) Rule, 1998 and Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules as amended in May, 2003. The disposable mercury bearing waste, irrespective of the source of generation containing mercury and mercury compounds equal to or greater than 50 mg. per kilogram is required to be disposed of as per the requirement of the Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 2003. Thus, concerned State Pollution Control Boards/Committees are empowered to ensure the compliance of provisions of these rules. In so far as the Central Government hospitals in Delhi are concerned, they follow the guidelines laid down by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).

The incinerators are used to dispose of the hospital waste material including the hazardous waste, that are required to be disposed of as such, as per the Biomedical Waste (Management and Handling) Rules, 1998 and Hazardous Waste (Management and Handling) Amendment Rules, 2003. Incinerators have been installed in various hospitals as per their requirements. During 2002-03, 243 incinerators were installed in the hospitals including government hospitals. In addition, there are 69 common bio-medical waste treatment facilities in the country which have incinerators.

The report of the NGO, Toxics Link, titled, `Lurking Menace - Mercury in the health-care sector` is under examination.